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DEPARTMENT OF VISITING NURSING AND SOCIAL WELFARE*



IN CHARGE OF

EDNA L. FOLEY, R.N.

PRESENT DAY OPPORTUNITIES

EXTRACTS FROM AN ADDRESS GIVEN TO THE DUBUQUE COUNTY
REGISTERED NURSES

By JESSIE W. KEYES

THERE is no higher calling for women (except motherhood) than that of caring for the sick poor, but years ago the nurse discovered that she must learn to care for the cause of the sickness and poverty, therefore some nurses began to study scientifically social conditions, bad tenements, unsanitary homes, sewers, alleys, delinquency and dependency of minors, their contributing causes, and deplorable results. This study brought the nurse into contact with three great institutions, the home, the school, the law. Failing in its duty, the home was teaching its children nothing of obedience, which is the first great law; careless of the moral and sanitary laws, the parents were lax in their duty to their children, and the children, consequently, had no respect for parents or other authority.

She found the school too often considered a place where the children would be safe and "out of the way;" there was no appreciation of the school as an educational force or of its possibilities as a social centre and influence. And the law! It was never thought of as a protection of individual rights, but as a persecutor in cases of law breaking. No one thought of the prevention of wrong and the education in law keeping.

In the work of caring for the sick poor, the nurse finds herself under the obligation to bring to her many charges service of all kinds, to aid in restoring each person to his place in the economic plan, therefore the visiting nurse must know intimately all agencies existing for the aid or education of the people. We find nurses studying heavy text-books on sociology or economics, but no book teaches more than actual service.

* Contributions for this department may be sent to Room 411, 158 Adams Street, Chicago.

School nursing is very like regular visiting nurse work except that the patient is usually kept in school and the treatment given in the little school dispensary or at home after class hours. Children who are reported out of school on account of sickness are visited at home, and it is remarkable what rapid recoveries are made in most of these cases of illness. This gives a valuable opportunity for educational work in the home.

Hospital social service includes such cases as these: The friendless, homeless girl in the maternity ward. Where would she go? A home must be found where she can board her baby and respectable employment and rooms for herself. A young man in the medical ward with tuberculosis, must be provided with clothing, transportation to relatives or a place in a tent colony. The widowed mother in the typhoid ward is worrying because her fourteen-year-old girl is out of work and keeping bad company. Her other children may be running the streets, out of school, neglected, improperly fed. There are many agencies to see in such a case. A teamster with broken leg is anxious and not doing well, because his wife is at home at the other end of a big city expecting to be confined any day and alone with four little children and no means of support. The man in the accident ward can speak no English, has no friends, belongs to no union or benefit society, and his old parents in Italy will starve or die with anxiety before he will be able to send them his regular letter and remittance. Then there are the scores of men and women, boys and girls, who are "out of a job" and "set out of their rooms," because of the sickness or accident that has brought them into the hospital wards. The discharged patients who are sent home not yet cured must be referred to the visiting nurses or the charity organization, so that the good work begun in the hospital will end in restoration to complete health and economic usefulness.

Social settlement work is a field into which many nurses go, and nurses make invaluable settlement workers.

As officers of the Juvenile Court, nurses are little known, but it can easily be seen what an invaluable asset the nurse's training would be, as she can quickly recognize the physical defects of the delinquent.

Personally I prefer the regular visiting nurse work, for I know it to be the most far reaching, practical philanthropy. Visiting nurses are not unlike others except that they may have more tact, which they need in handling so many people at a time. The visiting nurse must be absolutely "unafraid." She must know what is right, then go ahead. The visiting nurse does not practice medicine, unless you call the use of suggestive therapeutics as such.

Nurses who do private duty, going about from case to case, from home to home, may be the bridge, as educators carrying the message to those who have money and influence, private, social, and political. They may tell the people at one end of the bridge that their less fortunately situated brothers and sisters with many little children at the other end need cleaner alleys, need school inspection for their children, a children's dispensary and milk station, and a few safe places for children's play.

ITEMS

A NEW responsibility has been given the school nurses of St. Louis. Hereafter they will visit the homes of all children who are reported as ill or who are absent more than two days. This is not intended to usurp the work of the truant officer, but it is hoped that really sick children will be reported to physicians more quickly if the nurses look up the absentees.

THE San Francisco Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis has now four nurses in the field. The association is trying to approach the Chinese problem by educational methods, preparatory to a clinic in Chinatown. "Don't spit" cards, printed in Chinese, are already being distributed. The same cards, printed in English, Spanish, and Italian, are given away at the clinic and by the nurses.

THE Visiting Nurse Association of Hartford, Conn., has opened a day camp for tired mothers and women who will be benefited by a day's rest in the open air. The camp is situated in Colt Park, and a tent and reclining chairs are provided for the patients. Luncheon is served at noon, as the camp is open from 9 to 5. It is fittingly called Camp Rest A-while.

THE Waterville, Maine, Committee of the Central Maine Association for the Relief and Control of Tuberculosis is about to open a day camp for the treatment of tuberculosis patients. A dispensary of three rooms has been opened, clinics being held twice a week. Irene Foote, City Hospital, Minneapolis, for three years connected with the Instructive Visiting Nurse Association of that city, has accepted the position of district nurse.

THE Visiting Nurse Camp of Minneapolis has had a very successful second summer. The camp is for crippled and tuberculous children, and about forty have been taken thus far. Three nurses and a kindergartner

have cared for the children under the direction of a staff of physicians and the Visiting Nurse Committee. The Park Board gave the use of an ideal spot in Glenwood Park, upon a hill overlooking the city and in the vicinity of several small lakes. One of these is the "swimming hole" where the kindergartner takes the children who are allowed this form of exercise. A playground, well equipped with swings, teaters, sandbox, hammocks, croquet, and other games, serves to keep the others well amused, and reclining chairs and cots are provided for the least active.

The daily program is so suggestive that it is printed in full: 6.20 A.M., temperature; 7.00, rising bell; 7.30, breakfast; 9.00, light work; 10.00, lunch; 10 to 12 M., recreation and physical exercises; 12, dinner; 1 to 3 P.M., rest, reading, sewing, story telling, etc.; 3, lunch; 3.15, temperature, afterwards swimming and games until 5.30, supper; 7.30, first bell for bed; 8.00, last bell.

CHICAGO had three open-air schools for anæmic and pre-tuberculous children this summer, which were so successful that it is hoped others may be established. One hundred children in all were selected by the doctors on the staff of the Chicago Tuberculosis Institute. Nurses were detailed to visit each school daily to assist the physician in making any supplementary examinations and to take the afternoon temperature and pulse of each child. The Board of Education granted the use of the schools and materials, supplied a tent and reclining chairs, and paid the salaries of two teachers for each school, but the transportation and feeding (including the salaries of a dietitian and helper for each school) were financed entirely by the Chicago Public School Extension Committee. In spite of the unusual heat the children improved wonderfully, mentally as well as physically, and the results were so satisfactory that both children and workers hope that other schools may be the result of these three. Six weeks is a short time in which to demonstrate the value of fresh air and supervised exercise for tuberculous children, but six weeks spent in the open air, away from the dusty streets and the fly-ridden tenement kitchens, created changelings in several instances, brightened dulled eyes, sharpened stupid, tired, little brains, and gave nature a chance to bring other things beside weight nearer the normal. The time is coming when these schools will be as common as the usual public school, but it will take a lot of work to make the public see the need of them for the average child, so visiting and tuberculosis nurses must do their part in bringing around a happier day for children who are exposed to tuberculosis.

CORA BIRDSALL, graduate of Epworth Hospital, South Bend, Ind., has accepted the position of supervising nurse of South Bend Tuberculosis Camp, situated in Potawatama Park, just outside the city. The camp was originally financed by the Anti-Tuberculosis League, but now the county is going to help pay the board of indigent patients. The camp is beautifully located and has accommodations for twelve patients. Thus far four single and four double cottages and an administration shack have been erected.

SARAH B. HELBERT, graduate of Wichita Hospital, Kansas, has been engaged as Tuberculosis Lecturer for the Public Schools of Cincinnati, Ohio, by the Anti-Tuberculosis League. Since February, 1910, she has given *two hundred and fifty-four* lectures in the schools and to the children in the House of Refuge.

Where the school building contained an auditorium, the lectures were given to several hundred at once, but usually they were given in the school-room, and the children were questioned after each lecture. At the close of the term a prize contest was held and the children in the four upper grades wrote essays. A little girl, fourteen years old, who lived with an aunt in a single room, in the most congested quarters of the city, won the first prize. Another child, a boy of twelve, presented the following:

"A germ as small as a fairy
Flits lightly about in air;
Invisible, wicked, and airy,
She causes great despair.

"Consumption, a dread disease, is caused by the germ about which my little poem tells. This wicked little fairy, the consumption germ, is carried about in our clothes; she perches on the edges of public drinking cups and on objects that we use. Hundreds of her little sisters are carried about on one fly's leg.

"As the germ attacks weak bodies very easily, we must keep our bodies in healthy condition. We must be careful when we are walking in the streets or in any public buildings, for consumptives walk about and are often very careless. There is much danger when such a person spits, for in the sputum there are millions of these little germs. Each snaps in two, forming two germs, and in this way they multiply very quickly and are distributed everywhere."

Even the babies in the kindergarten became imbued with the spirit of the anti-tuberculosis fight and begged for a "lecture." The good from all this is incalculable and other cities may well follow this excellent example. Miss Helbert has recently been in Chicago, where she addressed the Nurses of the Chicago Tuberculosis Institute on her work in the schools. She is to talk to the children in all the parochial schools in Cincinnati this fall.